

FLOUR GRADERS HAVE A LUMPY TIME

By Mike J. Burrows

Of recent national importance during April 1978 was the decision of Spillers to cut its links with the bread manufacturing industry, causing the dismissal of nearly 8,000 people as 23 Bakeries closed. It also meant the disappearance of the brand names 'Wonderloaf' and 'Homepride' from the bread shelves.

In the seaside resort of Gorleston, the Matthes Bakery, one of the largest employers in the area, was one of the firms to go under the axe. Matthes had begun as a family bakery way back in 1894 and had been family-owned until completely taken over by Spillers in 1974.

The two other giant combines were not slow to move and several of Spillers bakeries found new owners six going to Associated British Foods and seven to Rank Hovis McDougal Limited.

One of the problems that besets any company which starts as a small family concern and becomes a multi-million giant, is that along the way other rivals are swallowed up and consequently the resulting conglomerate can become overloaded with unsuitable buildings and old fashioned machinery, with all the other problems that go with this kind of set-up. In this respect Spillers was no exception, having to buy its bakeries as and when they became available, disregarding the illogical distribution of its empire.

When Joel Spiller started his flour mill at Bridgewater, Somerset in 1832, one wonders if he had visions of what his Company was to become. One thing is known for certain, he was not against expansion, for over the next few years he opened mills at Bristol and Cardiff.

Incorporated as a limited company in 1887, Spiller & Company (Cardiff) Limited, was formed to take over the business of Spiller Company, Millers, Grain & Flour Merchants. In 1889/90 he amalgamated with the business of William Baker & Son of Bristol, and changed the firm's name to Spillers & Bakers Limited.

In 1919 the Company adopted the style of Spillers Millers & Associated Industries Limited, with a registered office at Broad Street House 9 London, E.C.2. At the same time they registered a new company, Spillers & Bakers Limited, to carry on the business of flour millers. The Company held the entire share capital of the following companies, Spillers & Bakers Limited; W. Vernon Limited; F.A. Frost & Sons Limited; Watson Todd & Company (Millers) Limited; John Jackson & Sons Limited; Rushworth, Ingleby and Lofthouse Limited; The Cardiff & Channel Mills Limited; Spillers Grain Company Limited; Uvoco Cereals Limited; Turog Brown Flour Company Limited; Spillers Victoria Foods Limited; The Associated British Flour, No.1 Group; The No.1 Milling Group Import Agency Limited; The Noel Milling Group Export Agency Limited.

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FLOUR GRADERS Continued

Coming to the 1960's, they bought British Feeding Meals Company Limited; Scottish Animal Products (Kennomeat and Kattomeat pet foods) and later the most important United Kingdom canner of meat convenience foods - Tyne Brand Products Limited.

Moving into the Canadian and American markets in the 1970's, agreeing in principle to buying for £10 million, Modern Maid Food Products, the American flour based food ingredient manufacturers.

Finally, "rationalising" their business by off-loading their baking interests in 1978.

Perfins noted for the Spillers Group are:-

	S&B/L ^D	11,12,13/7,7	4½mm (111a)
Cat. No. 83	S&B/L ^D .	10,12,13/7,7	4½mm (111a)
Cat. No.382.1	SI/LD	9,4/6,6	4½mm
Cat. No.431.6	SL	9,6	6mm